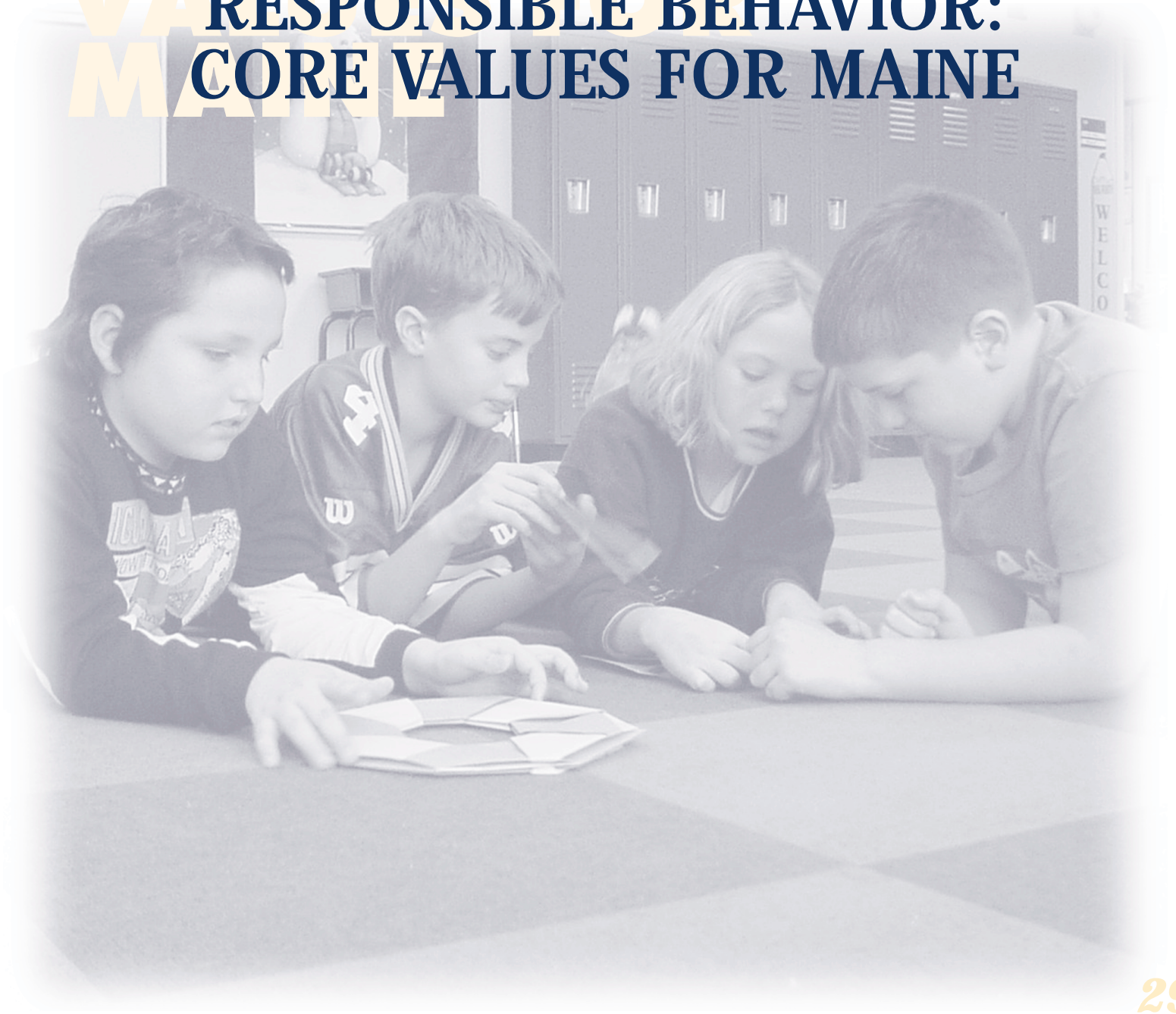




## CHAPTER FOUR

# CORE VALUES MAINE

## STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR: CORE VALUES FOR MAINE



# STANDARDS FOR ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

The Commission itself engaged in the process outlined in Chapter Three. We agreed to a set of values or standards that mattered to us as a “community” of representative voices, and then proceeded to define these values by developing a list of illustrative behaviors for each. The values and behaviors represented here are fundamental to a caring, civil society. These values and behaviors describe a commitment to respect, tolerance of diversity, and the overall well-being and safety of all.

These values and indicators are our standards for ethical and responsible student behavior. Our list is by no means exhaustive or exclusive, and the language of these behavioral indicators should vary as appropriate (e.g., for third grade students vs. twelfth grade students). However, the intent and spirit of these standards must remain intact. In our view, it is consistent with the mandate from the Legislature—to set statewide standards that will serve as a guide for local codes of conduct—for the Commission to describe fundamental values, to declare these expectations to be common for all, but to simultaneously urge that these values be customized and adapted by each community.

Our standards embrace positive values that

we should all strive to demonstrate in our behavior. Honoring these values demands that adults and fellow students intervene promptly and consistently to end harassment, teasing, bullying, exclusionary behavior, foul language, and violence wherever and whenever they occur. While the expression of these values can and should vary across communities, Maine schools must—at a minimum—ensure that all within their walls will find respect, tolerance, and safety.

We strongly urge schools and communities to engage in this process themselves. Such engagement will result in a sense of ownership that cannot be achieved by simply adopting another group’s list of values. The standards here will serve as the reference point for the nature and scope of the core values developed in each community. We recognize, however, that some schools and communities may choose to consider a pre-existing list of values as a starting point. Wherever the community begins its process, the school or community must recognize the critical importance of collective affirmation of these values by that particular community, and must incorporate the fundamentals of inclusiveness and deliberation outlined in the process in Chapter Three.

## CORE VALUES

### AN ETHICAL PERSON IS...

#### Respect

*Respectful of  
Others and Self*

#### Honesty

*Honest in all Academic  
Endeavors and  
Interpersonal Relationships*

#### Compassion

*Compassionate in Dealing  
with the Limitations and  
Sufferings of Others*

#### Fairness

*Fair in Dealing With Others*

#### Responsibility

*Responsible for Personal  
Actions as an Individual and  
a Member of the Community*

#### Courage

*Courageous in the Face of  
Ethical Challenges*



## CORE VALUES

### *A person who is RESPECTFUL of others and self*

#### DOES...

- Appreciate and honor diversity.
- Tolerate views and beliefs that differ from personal views and beliefs.
- Support and contribute to healthful habits and safe environments for self and others.

#### DOES NOT...

- Engage in harmful behavior such as substance abuse or sexual promiscuity.
- Participate in activities that have the potential to cause physical or emotional harm.
- Make derogatory statements about another's gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, religion, disability, intellect or appearance.

*"Respect is a unifying, universal value."*

A High School Student

### *A person who is HONEST in all academic endeavors and interpersonal relationships*

#### DOES...

- Seek to speak the truth, respectfully.
- Understand the difference between collaboration and collusion.
- Recognize that trust is an essential component of all relationships, including relationships with peers, parents, teachers, and co-workers.

#### DOES NOT...

- Plagiarize the work of others, including fellow students, siblings, or parents.
- Engage in secretive, sneaky, fraudulent or manipulative behavior.
- Take or damage the property of others.

*"I think respect and understanding is all we need. With those two qualities, all other issues needed for a good environment would fall in place."*

A High School Sophomore

### *A person who is COMPASSIONATE in dealing with the limitations and sufferings of others*

#### DOES...

- Treat all people with kindness.
- Possess an ability to empathize with fellow human beings.
- Lend a helping hand to those in need.

#### DOES NOT ...

- Tease or taunt those who are different.
- Seek to judge others, but rather seeks to understand others in terms of our common humanity.
- Seek to draw undue attention to another's shortcomings.

## CORE VALUES

### *A person who is FAIR in dealing with others*

#### DOES...

- Seek to strike a balance between the needs and desires of the individual and the needs and desires of the community.
- Understand the distinction between justice and vengeance.
- Treat others the way she or he would like to be treated.

#### DOES NOT...

- Engage in malicious criticism of others.
- Seek to steal from or cheat others.
- Attempt to further one's own interests or desires at the expense of another.

*"Treat people like you want to be treated."*  
A Fifth Grade Student

### *A person who is RESPONSIBLE for personal actions as an individual and a member of the community*

#### DOES...

- Acknowledge making a mistake.
- Accept the consequences of personal actions or failures to act.
- Report harmful or hateful behavior to a trustworthy authority figure.

#### DOES NOT...

- Evade the just consequences of personal actions.
- Seek to advance one's own interests or desires at the expense of the school or the larger community.
- Rationalize or make excuses for unacceptable behavior.

### *A person who is COURAGEOUS in the face of ethical challenges*

#### DOES...

- The right thing even if it's not popular.
- Seek the advice and/or assistance of a trustworthy adult when making difficult decisions or when in a dangerous or troublesome situation.
- Hold high aspirations for self and community.

#### DOES NOT...

- Say, "I cannot", but instead says, "I will try," when faced with difficult challenges.
- Stand idly by while others engage in unethical or harmful behavior.
- Sacrifice aspirations when confronted by academic or ethical setbacks.

*"...if there is some person getting really beaten up and stuff, help them and tell other people that you shouldn't do this or that."*  
An 8 Year -Old Child